

What is claimed is:

1. A method for transcoding media content from a source type to a destination type, comprising the steps of:
  - (a) fetching media content;
  - (b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;
  - (c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;
  - (d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content;
  - (e) inserting a clip or trailer or both into the transcoded media content; and
  - (f) transmitting said transcoded media content including said clip or trailer or both.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file including said clip or trailer or both is downloaded to a destination of the destination type.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file including said clip or trailer or both is transmitted as a stream of digital data.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the media content type is defined according to at least one publishing variable, wherein said at least one publishing variable includes:
  - (1) the file format of the media content;
  - (2) the bit-rate of the media content;
  - (3) the compression algorithm according to which the media content is stored;
  - (4) the communication protocol according to which the media content is transferred; or
  - (5) the physical medium on which the media content is stored; or
  - (6) combinations thereof; and

wherein said transcoding operation comprises converting said at least one publishing variable of the media content from a source publishing variable type to a destination publishing variable type.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(g) storing said transcoded media content in a transcoded cache; and

(h) responding to subsequent transcoding requests for the media content by fetching said transcoded media content from said transcoded cache, and transmitting said transcoded media content.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

(i) determining whether to keep said transcoded media content in said transcoded cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content; and

(2) archiving the media content in a master archive;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said archived media content from said master archive.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving location and access information for the media content;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching the media content using said location and access information.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content as a stream of digital data;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said stream of digital data in response to said transcoding request.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

- (1) receiving the media content; and
- (2) downloading said transcoded media content including said clip or trailer or both.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising constraining access to said transcoded media content by building-in a conditional access constraint.

12. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

- (a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;
- (b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;
- (c) receiving requests for the media content;
- (d) inserting a clip or trailer or both into the transcoded media content; and
- (e) selecting and delivering a copy of one of said plurality of copies including said clip or trailer or both in response to each of said requests.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

- (e) deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein deleting operation comprises deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on a least-recently-used algorithm.

15. A method for transcoding media content from a source type to a destination type, comprising the steps of:

- (a) fetching media content;

(b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;

(c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;

(d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content;

(f) downloading said transcoded media content to a destination of the destination type.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein said media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file is downloaded as a stream of digital data.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the media content type is defined according to at least one publishing variable, wherein said at least one publishing variable includes:

(1) the file format of the media content;

(2) the bit-rate of the media content;

(3) the compression algorithm according to which the media content is stored;

(4) the communication protocol according to which the media content is transferred; or

(5) the physical medium on which the media content is stored; or

(6) combinations thereof; and

wherein said transcoding operation comprises converting said at least one publishing variable of the media content from a source publishing variable type to a destination publishing variable type.

19. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

(g) storing said transcoded media content in a transcoded cache; and

(h) responding to subsequent transcoding requests for the media content by fetching said transcoded media content from said transcoded cache, and transmitting said transcoded media content.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

(i) determining whether to keep said transcoded media content in said transcoded cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

21. The method of claim 15, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content; and

(2) archiving the media content in a master archive;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said archived media content from said master archive.

22. The method of claim 15, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving location and access information for the media content;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching the media content using said location and access information.

23. The method of claim 15, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content as a stream of digital data;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said stream of digital data in response to said transcoding request.

24. The method of claim 15, further comprising constraining access to said transcoded media content by building-in a conditional access constraint.

25. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

(a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;

- (b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;
- (c) receiving requests for the media content; and
- (d) selecting and downloading a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

- (e) deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein deleting operation comprises deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on a least-recently-used algorithm.

28. The method of claim 25, further comprising constraining access to said transcoded media content by building-in a conditional access constraint.

29. A method for transcoding media content from a source type to a destination type, comprising the steps of:

- (a) fetching media content;
- (b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;
- (c) automatically detecting one or more destination format criteria without end-user input;
- (d) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;
- (e) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content; and
- (f) transmitting said transcoded media content.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file is downloaded to a destination of the destination type.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein said media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file is transmitted as a stream of digital data.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein said one or more destination format criteria comprises:

- (1) the file format of the media content;
- (2) the bit-rate of the media content;
- (3) the compression algorithm according to which the media content is stored;
- (4) the communication protocol according to which the media content is transferred; or
- (5) the physical medium on which the media content is stored; or
- (6) combinations thereof.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the media content type is defined according to at least one publishing variable, and wherein said transcoding operation comprises converting said at least one publishing variable of the media content from a source publishing variable type to a destination publishing variable type.

34. The method of claim 29, further comprising:

- (g) storing said transcoded media content in a transcoded cache; and
- (h) responding to subsequent transcoding requests for the media content by fetching said transcoded media content from said transcoded cache, and transmitting said transcoded media content.

35. The method of claim 34, further comprising:

- (i) determining whether to keep said transcoded media content in said transcoded cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

36. The method of claim 29, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

- (1) receiving the media content; and
- (2) archiving the media content in a master archive;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said archived media content from said master archive.

37. The method of claim 29, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving location and access information for the media content;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching the media content using said location and access information.

38. The method of claim 29, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content as a stream of digital data;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said stream of digital data in response to said transcoding request.

39. The method of claim 29, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content; and

(2) downloading said transcoded media content including said clip or trailer or both.

40. The method of claim 29, further comprising constraining access to said transcoded media content by building-in a conditional access constraint.

41. The method of claim 29, further comprising detecting and applying further criteria independent of destination type based upon designated rules.

42. The method of claim 41, said designated rules including bandwidth criteria.

43. The method of claim 41, said designated rules including inserting a trailer or a clip or both with said transcoded media content.



44. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

(a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;

(b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;

(c) receiving requests for the media content;

(d) automatically detecting one or more destination format criteria without end-user input;

(e) selecting and delivering a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests.

45. The method of claim 44, further comprising:

(e) deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein deleting operation comprises deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on a least-recently-used algorithm.

47. The method of claim 44, wherein said one or more destination format criteria comprises:

(1) the file format of the media content;

(2) the bit-rate of the media content;

(3) the compression algorithm according to which the media content is stored;

(4) the communication protocol according to which the media content is transferred; or

(5) the physical medium on which the media content is stored; or

(6) combinations thereof.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein the media content type is defined according to at least one publishing variable, and wherein said transcoding operation comprises converting said at least one publishing variable of the media content from a source publishing variable type to a destination publishing variable type.

49. The method of claim 44, further comprising detecting and applying further criteria independent of destination type based upon designated rules.

50. The method of claim 49, said designated rules including bandwidth criteria.

51. The method of claim 49, said designated rules including inserting a trailer or a clip or both with said transcoded media content.

52. A method for transcoding media content from a source type to a destination type, comprising:

- (a) fetching media content;
- (b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;
- (c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;
- (d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content;
- (e) pre-caching said transcoded media content during an off-peak period; and
- (f) transmitting said transcoded media content during an on-peak period.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file is downloaded to a destination of the destination type.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein said media content is fetched, sent and transcoded as a stream of digital data and said transcoded media file is transmitted as a stream of digital data.

55. The method of claim 52, wherein the media content type is defined according to at least one publishing variable, wherein said at least one publishing variable includes:

- (1) the file format of the media content;
- (2) the bit-rate of the media content;

- (3) the compression algorithm according to which the media content is stored;
- (4) the communication protocol according to which the media content is transferred; or
- (5) the physical medium on which the media content is stored; or
- (6) combinations thereof; and

wherein said transcoding operation comprises converting said at least one publishing variable of the media content from a source publishing variable type to a destination publishing variable type.

56. The method of claim 52, further comprising:

- (g) storing further transcoded media content in a transcoded cache; and
- (h) responding to subsequent transcoding requests for the media content by fetching said transcoded media content from said transcoded cache, and transmitting said transcoded media content.

57. The method of claim 56, further comprising:

- (i) determining whether to keep said transcoded media content in said transcoded cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

58. The method of claim 52, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

- (1) receiving the media content; and
- (2) archiving the media content in a master archive;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said archived media content from said master archive.

59. The method of claim 52, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

- (1) receiving location and access information for the media content;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching the media content using said location and access information.

60. The method of claim 52, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content as a stream of digital data;

wherein said fetching operation comprises fetching said stream of digital data in response to said transcoding request.

61. The method of claim 52, further comprising publishing the media content, wherein said publishing comprises:

(1) receiving the media content; and

(2) downloading said transcoded media content including said clip or trailer or both.

62. The method of claim 52, further comprising constraining access to said transcoded media content by building-in a conditional access constraint.

63. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

(a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;

(b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;

(c) receiving requests for the media content;

(d) pre-caching said transcoded media content during an off-peak period; and

(e) selecting and delivering during an on-peak period a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests.

64. The method of claim 63, further comprising:

(e) deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on an intelligent algorithm.

65. The method of claim 64, wherein deleting operation comprises deleting at least one of said plurality of copies from said cache based on a least-recently-used algorithm.

66. A method for providing media content transcoding services, comprising:

- (a) fetching media content;
- (b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;
- (c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;
- (d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content;
- (e) transmitting said transcoded media content according to bandwidth criteria supplied to a media content service provider that performs said media content transcoding operation.

67. A method for providing media content transcoding services, comprising:

- (a) fetching media content;
- (b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;
- (c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;
- (d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content; and
- (e) transmitting said transcoded media content according to bandwidth criteria selected by a transcoding service provider that also performs said media content transcoding operation.

68. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

- (a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;
- (b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;
- (c) receiving requests for the media content; and

(d) selecting and delivering a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests according to bandwidth criteria selected by a transcoding service provider that also performs said media content transcoding operation.

69. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

(a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;

(b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;

(c) receiving requests for the media content; and

(d) selecting and delivering a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests according to bandwidth criteria supplied to a media content service provider that performs said media content transcoding operation.

70. A method for providing media content transcoding services, comprising:

(a) fetching media content;

(b) selecting one of a plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a plurality of source types to a plurality of destination types, wherein said one transcoder is selected based at least on the destination type;

(c) sending the media content to said selected transcoder;

(d) transcoding the media content to the destination type, thereby generating transcoded media content; and

(e) transmitting said transcoded media content; and

(f) wherein said selected one of said plurality of transcoders for transcoding from a source type to a destination type which have different:

(1) file formats of the media content;

(2) bit-rates of the media content;

(3) communication protocols according to which the media content is transferred;

(4) physical media on which the media content is stored;

(5) encoding formats;

(6) compression algorithms; or

(7) combinations thereof.

71. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different file formats.

72. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different bit rates.

73. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different communication protocols.

74. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different physical media on which said media content is stored.

75. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different encoding formats.

76. The method of claim 70, said source type and said destination type having different compression algorithms.

77. A method for delivering media content over a network, comprising:

(a) transcoding the media content to generate a plurality of copies of the media content, each of said plurality of copies having a different destination type or a different source type or both;

(b) storing said plurality of copies in a cache;

(c) receiving requests for the media content; and

(d) selecting and delivering a copy of one of said plurality of copies in response to each of said requests,

(e) wherein said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies having different:

(1) file formats of the media content;

(2) bit-rates of the media content;

- (3) communication protocols according to which the media content is transferred;
- (4) physical media on which the media content is stored;
- (5) encoding formats;
- (6) compression algorithms; or
- (7) combinations thereof.

78. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies having different file formats.

79. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies further having different bit rates.

80. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies further having different communication protocols.

81. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies further having different physical media on which said media content is stored.

82. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies further having different encoding formats.

83. The method of claim 77, said different destination type or different source type or both of said each of said plurality of copies further having different compression algorithms.